JOSHUA WILLIAMSON ★ TOM REILLY ★ JORDIE BELLAIRE
DUKE
image
#05

ENERGON UNIVERSE

CONFIDENTIAL

ALIAS

DUKE

ADDITIONAL FIELD OPERATIVES

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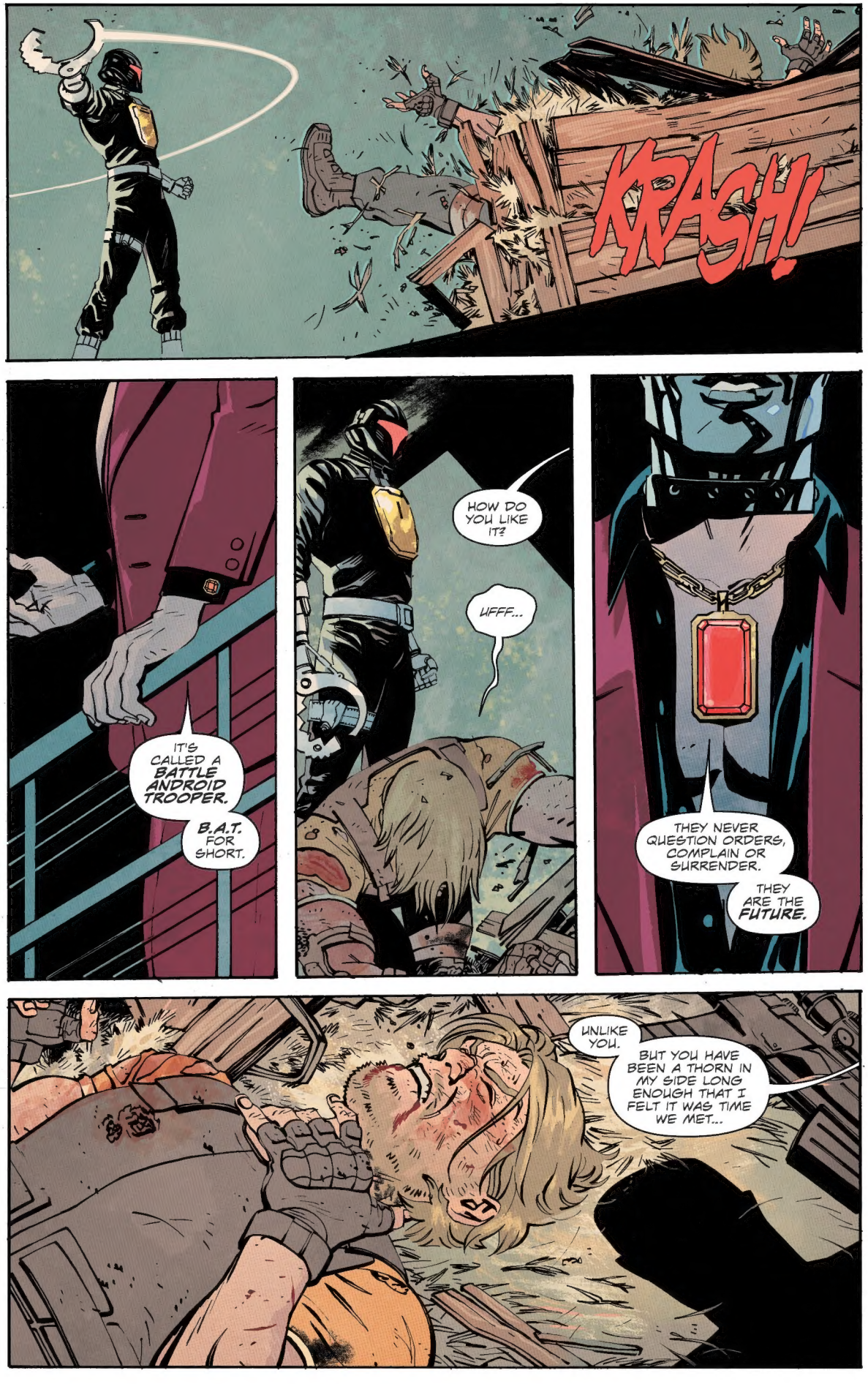
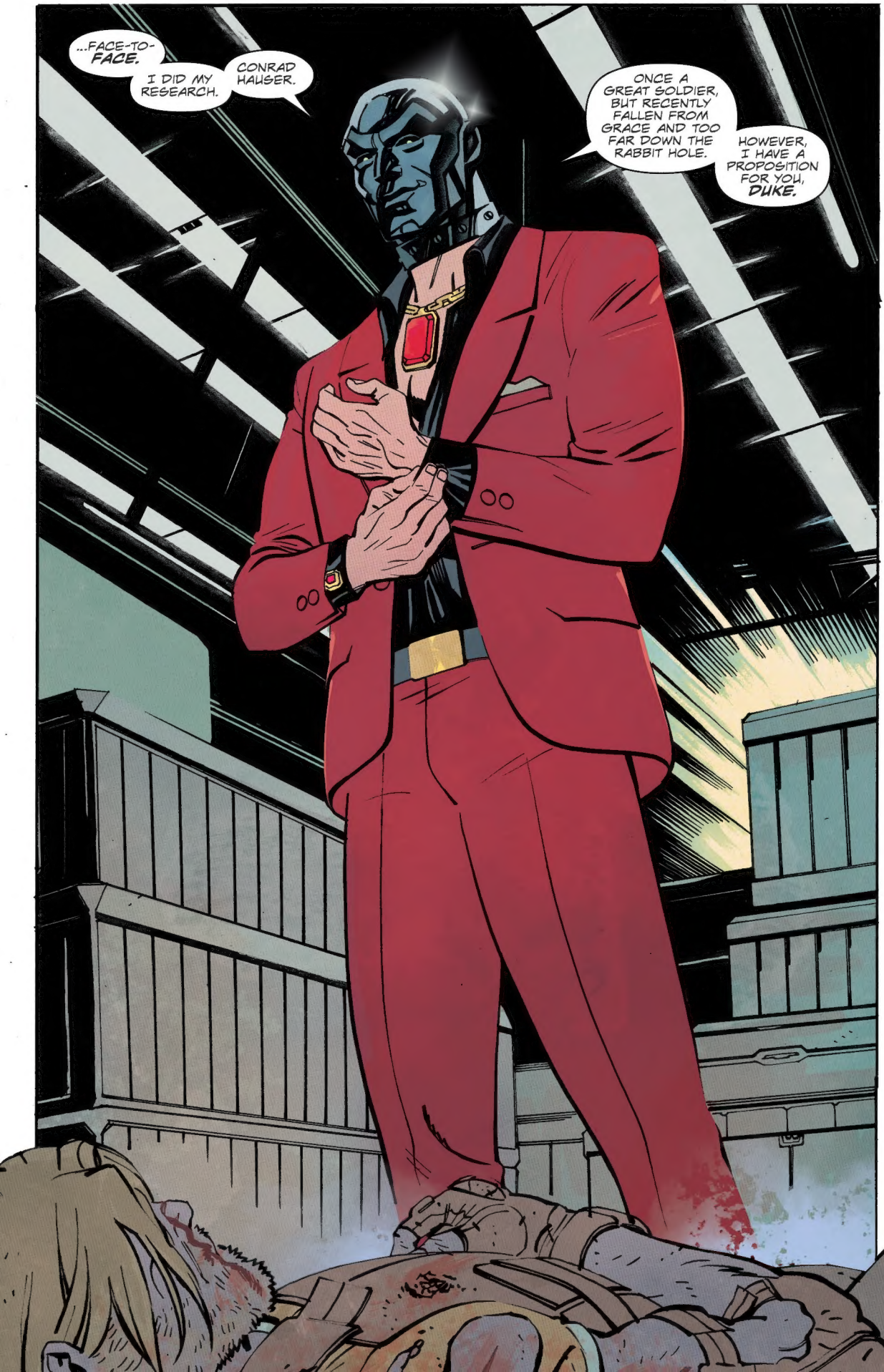
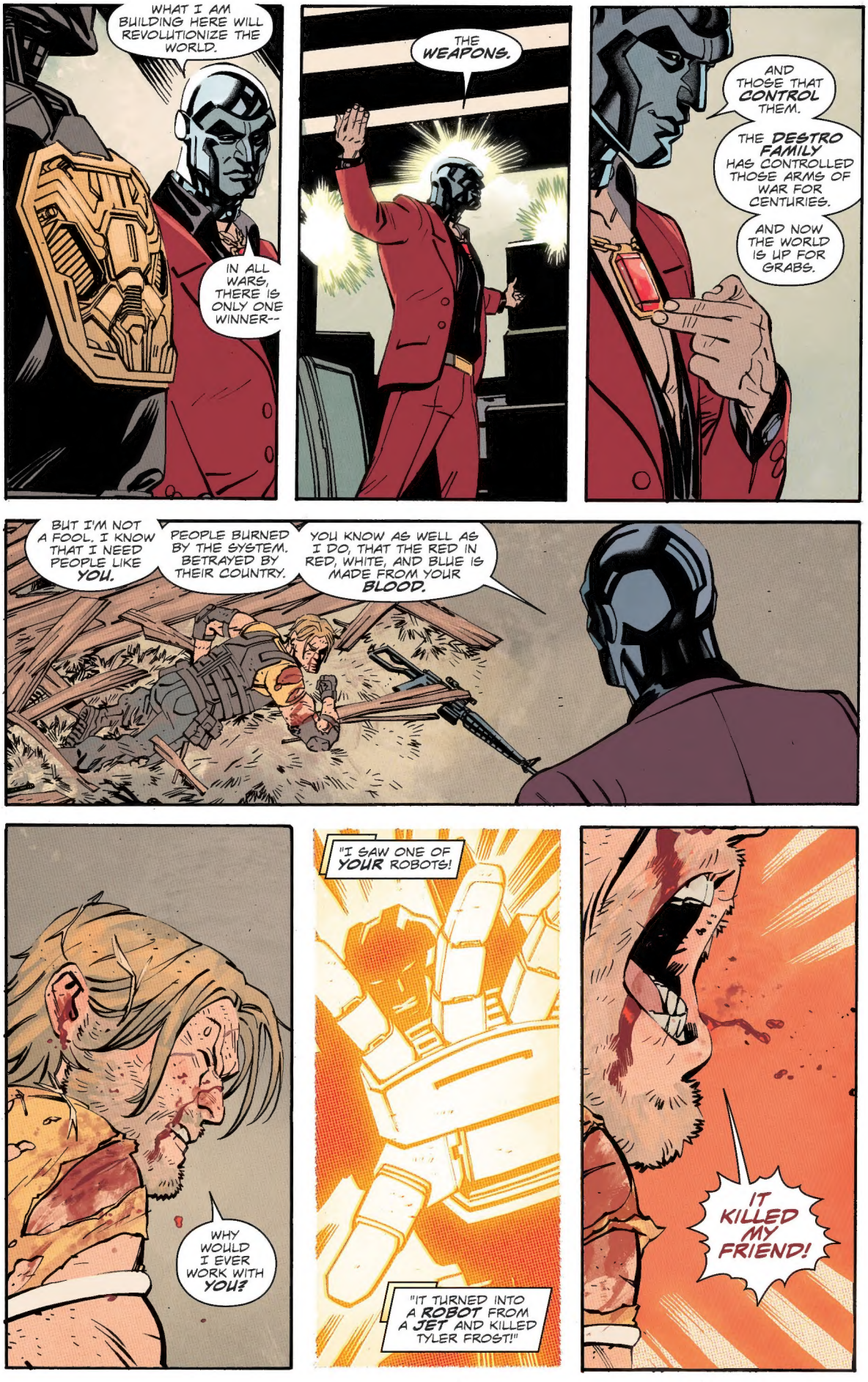
WHERE THE HELL IS DUKE?!
IF YOU WANT TO EVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY AGAIN, CLUTCH, YOU'LL TELL US WHERE DUKE TOOK THAT SKYSTRIKER.
OH, PLEASE, MRS. NASH IN THE FIFTH GRADE WAS SCARIER THAN YOU.
IF YOU THINK I WOULD EVER RAT OUT MY BUDDY...
YOU CAN TAKE A WALK, CHIEF.
COLONEL HAWK, SIR?
WE FOUND THIS IN THE WRECKAGE...

"...IT COULD LEAD US TO DUKE."
UK...
UK...
DOES ANYTHING STOP THIS GUY? I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I'M IMPRESSED.
PERHAPS IT'S TIME FOR A DIFFERENT APPROACH.
BEEP.


KRASH!
IT'S CALLED A BATTLE ANDROID TROOPER.
B.A.T. FOR SHORT.
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
UFFF...
THEY NEVER QUESTION ORDERS, COMPLAIN OR SURRENDER.
THEY ARE THE FUTURE.
UNLIKE YOU.
BUT YOU HAVE BEEN A THORN IN MY SIDE LONG ENOUGH THAT I FELT IT WAS TIME WE MET...


...FACE-TO-FACE.
I DID MY RESEARCH.
CONRAD HAUSER.
ONCE A GREAT SOLDIER, BUT RECENTLY FALLEN FROM GRACE AND TOO FAR DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE.
HOWEVER, I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU, DUKE.


WHAT I AM BUILDING HERE WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE WORLD.
IN ALL WARS, THERE IS ONLY ONE WINNER--
THE WEAPONS.
AND THOSE THAT CONTROL THEM.
THE DESTRO FAMILY HAS CONTROLLED THOSE ARMS OF WAR FOR CENTURIES.
AND NOW THE WORLD IS UP FOR GRABS.
BUT I'M NOT A FOOL. I KNOW THAT I NEED PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
PEOPLE BURNED BY THE SYSTEM. BETRAYED BY THEIR COUNTRY.
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO, THAT THE RED IN RED, WHITE, AND BLUE IS MADE FROM YOUR BLOOD.
WHY WOULD I EVER WORK WITH YOU?
"I SAW ONE OF YOUR ROBOTS!
"IT TURNED INTO A ROBOT FROM A JET AND KILLED TYLER FROST!"
IT KILLED MY FRIEND!

HM. IT TURNED INTO--?
FASCINATING.
BUT NOT ONE OF MINE.
WHAT?
IT APPEARS WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY.
IT WAS BUILT BY YOUR PEOPLE. THEY LIED TO YOU.
THIS IS WHY YOU CAME TO DR. BURKHART, AND THEN EVENTUALLY TO ME.
BECAUSE YOU WERE IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS.
AND I CAN GIVE THEM TO YOU.
JOIN ME.

KLANG
ARE YOU INSANE?
NICE SPEECH YOU GOT THERE.
IT ONLY SOUNDED A LITTLE REHEARSED.
BUT HOW ABOUT I SAVE US ALL A LOT OF HEADACHES...
...AND TAKE YOU AND ALL THE ROBOTS OUT OF COMMISSION?
FINE, HAVE IT YOUR WAY...

SHOW HIM WHAT YOU CAN DO.
BEEP.
TK!
AH!
THOOM!
TK-TUK.
KLIK.

DISPOSE OF HIS BODY ONCE THE B.A.T. IS DONE WITH HIM.
BOSS, WE GOT A BIGGER PROBLEM.
WHATEVER TECH DUKE HAD PINGED AGAIN. HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED.
GOT YA NOW!
>SIGH.< THEN WE LEAVE.
THIS PLACE WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT TAX WRITE-OFF, ANYWAY.
CRAP, UNLOADED.
I HONESTLY DIDN'T EXPECT THEM TO PRACTICE GUN SAFETY.
BURN EVERYTHING TO THE GROUND. CAN YOU DO THAT FOR ME, SCRAP-IRON?
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.
I'LL STILL MAKE DO!

FFWOOSSH!
WHOA.
KRTSCH!
YOU RUN ON BATTERIES.
WHILE I'M GOOD OL' AMERICAN MAN-POWER!
I JUST NEED TO OUTLAST YOU!
KLZZTT.

TRASH!
KILLED!
TAKE THAT, YOU STUPID ROBOT!
SLAM!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!
FFWOOSHH!

SMASH

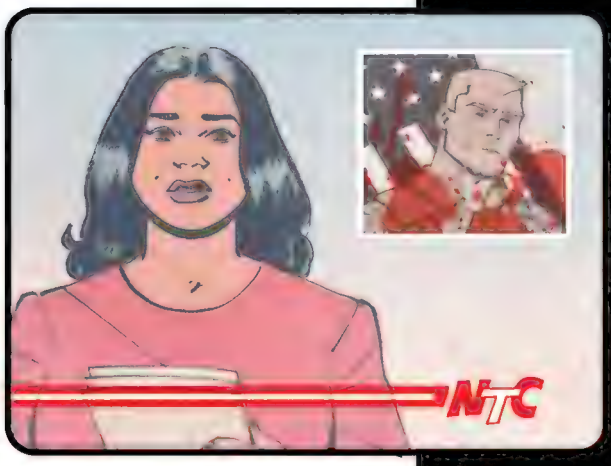
I DID IT...

WE AIN'T GOT ALL DAY!
THE B.A.T.'S OFFLINE, SIR. NO WAY THAT GUY TOOK IT DOWN...
MY SCIENTISTS WARNED ME.
WE NEED A BETTER POWER SOURCE...ONE THAT CAN LAST LONGER IN A REAL FIGHT.

BYE-BYE.

I GOT YOU, FROST.
I GOT YOU...LET'S GO HOME...

BOOM!
BOOM!
WHRRRR
FIRST SERGEANT CONRAD HAUSER WAS FOUND DEAD TODAY.



HIS BODY WAS DISCOVERED BY A PAIR OF HIKERS INVESTIGATING FIREWORKS IN THE COLORADO MOUNTAINS.

IT BRINGS A HEARTBREAKING END TO THE TRAGIC STORY OF A ONCE HIGHLY RESPECTED AND DECORATED SOLDIER.

AFTER A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT MONTHS AGO, HAUSER WAS PLACED ON INDEFINITE LEAVE.

HE WAS THEN CAUGHT UP IN A MASSIVE CONSPIRACY AND FRAMED FOR THE MURDER OF DR. ADELE BURKHART AND FIFTEEN OTHERS, FORCING HIM TO GO ON THE RUN FROM THE AUTHORITIES.

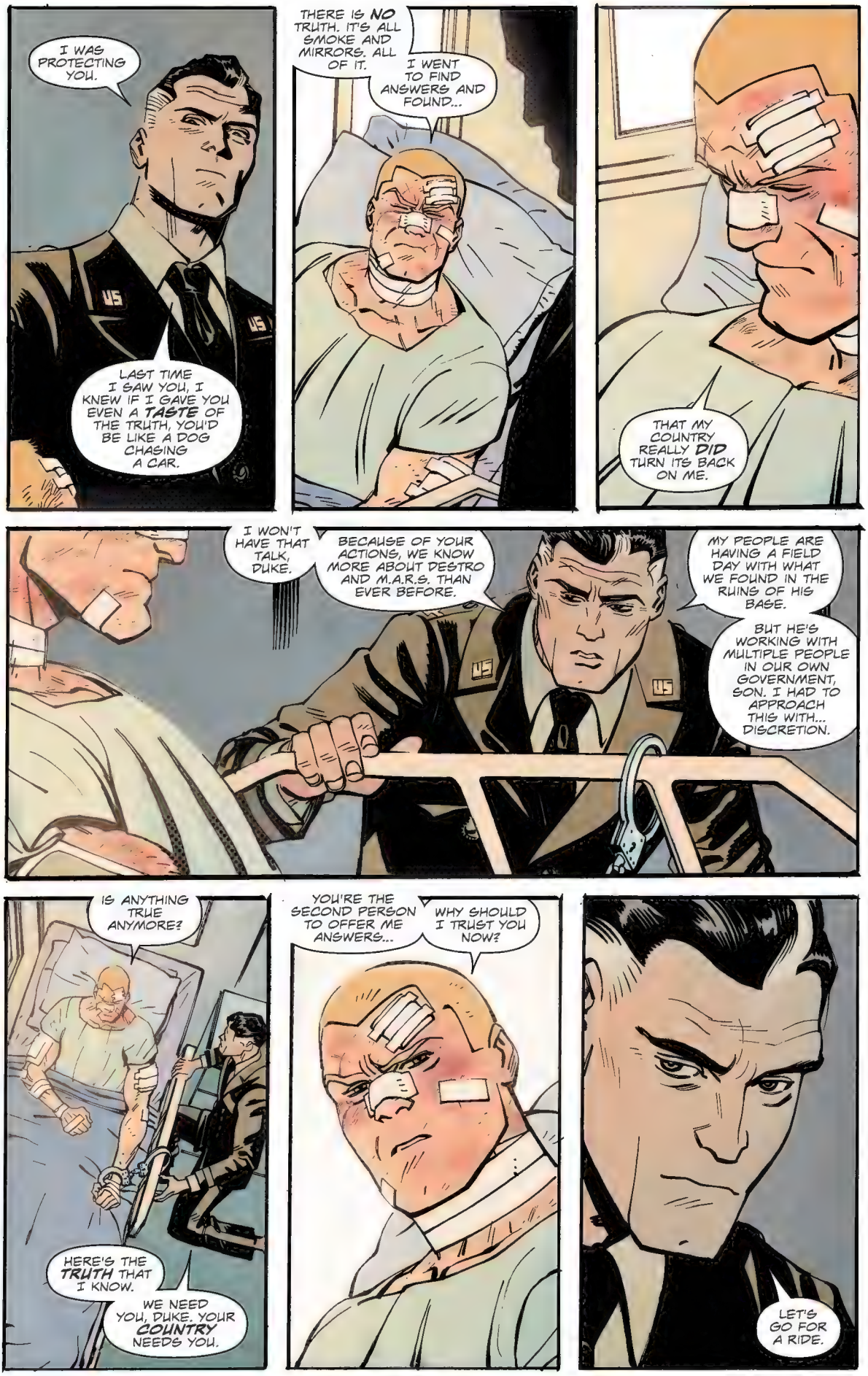
REPORTS COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON REVEAL THAT THE DEATHS WERE ACTUALLY COMMITTED BY A GUN FOR HIRE GROUP CALLED THE "BLOODHOUNDS", LED BY THIS MAN, SEBASTIAN BLUDD.

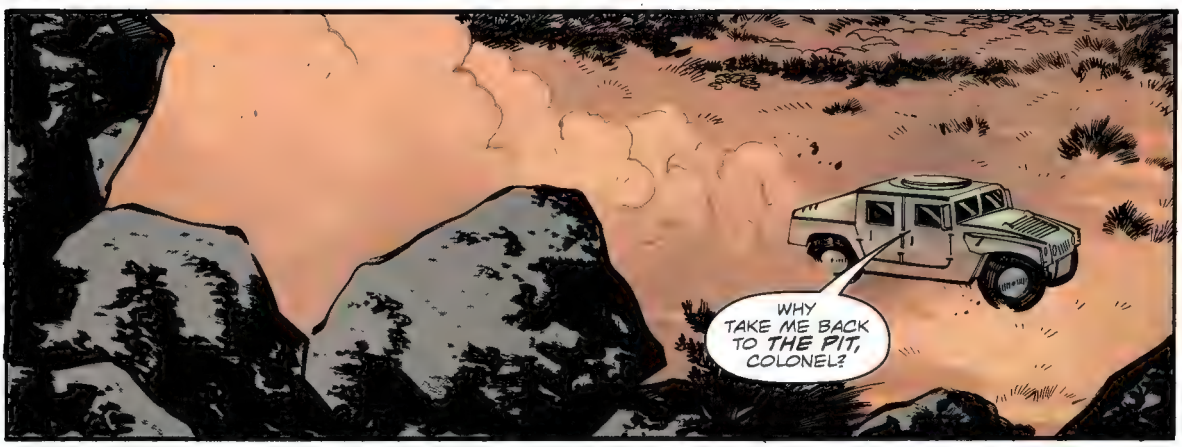
ON TOP TEN MOST WANTED LISTS ACROSS THE GLOBE, BLUDD REMAINS AT LARGE.

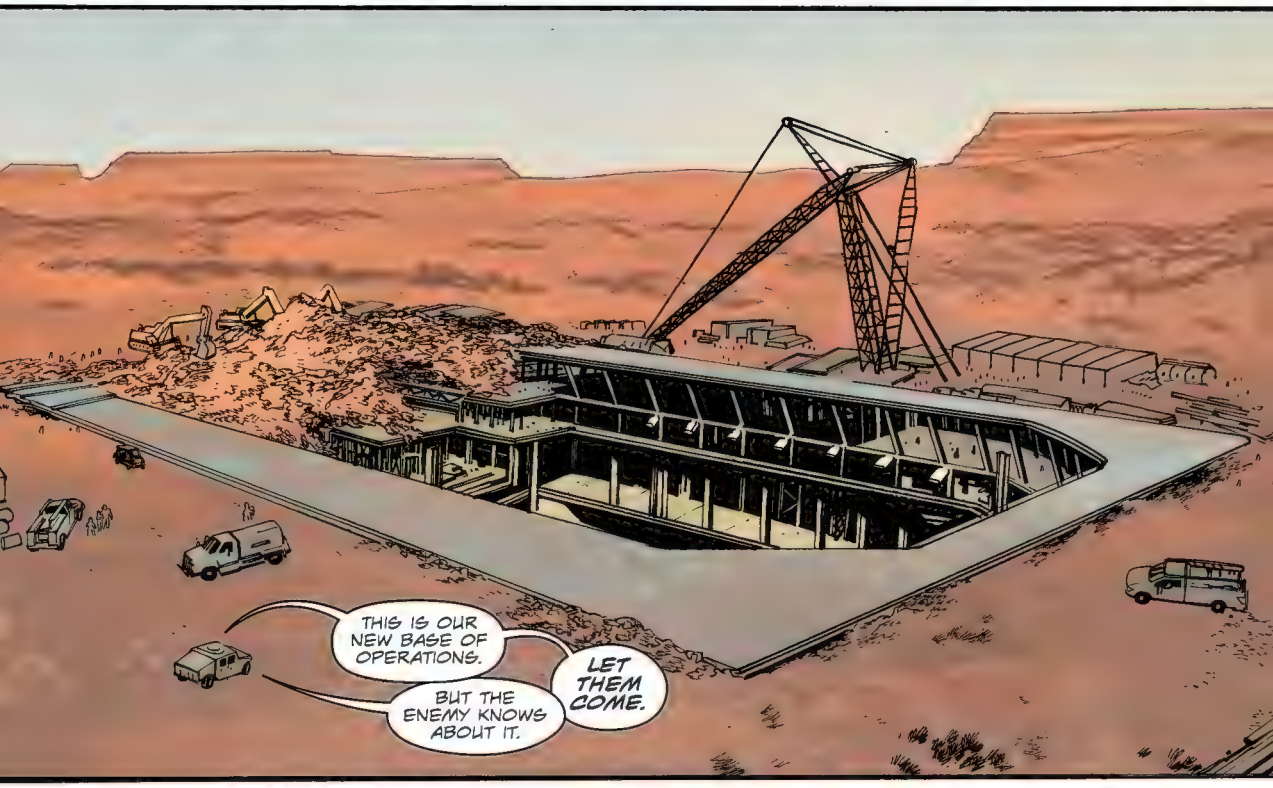
SERGEANT HAUSER WILL BE TO LAID TO REST AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.

A COLONEL HAWK WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "HE WILL BE GIVEN A FUNERAL DESERVING...OF AN ***AMERICAN HERO.***"

UGHH... WHERE?
$#@$.
THAT'S NO WAY TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF A LADY, SOLDIER.
DEAD OR NOT.
OH, WHATEVER, SIR.
HERE TO LOCK ME UP AND THROW AWAY THE KEY, COLONEL?


I WAS PROTECTING YOU.
LAST TIME I SAW YOU, I KNEW IF I GAVE YOU EVEN A TASTE OF THE TRUTH, YOU'D BE LIKE A DOG CHASING A CAR.
THERE IS NO TRUTH. IT'S ALL SMOKE AND MIRRORS. ALL OF IT.
I WENT TO FIND ANSWERS AND FOUND...
THAT MY COUNTRY REALLY DID TURN ITS BACK ON ME.
I WON'T HAVE THAT TALK, DUKE.
BECAUSE OF YOUR ACTIONS, WE KNOW MORE ABOUT DESTRO AND M.A.R.S. THAN EVER BEFORE.
MY PEOPLE ARE HAVING A FIELD DAY WITH WHAT WE FOUND IN THE RUINS OF HIS BASE.
BUT HE'S WORKING WITH MULTIPLE PEOPLE IN OUR OWN GOVERNMENT, SON. I HAD TO APPROACH THIS WITH... DISCRETION.
IS ANYTHING TRUE ANYMORE?
HERE'S THE TRUTH THAT I KNOW.
WE NEED YOU, DUKE. YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU.
YOU'RE THE SECOND PERSON TO OFFER ME ANSWERS...
WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU NOW?
LET'S GO FOR A RIDE.

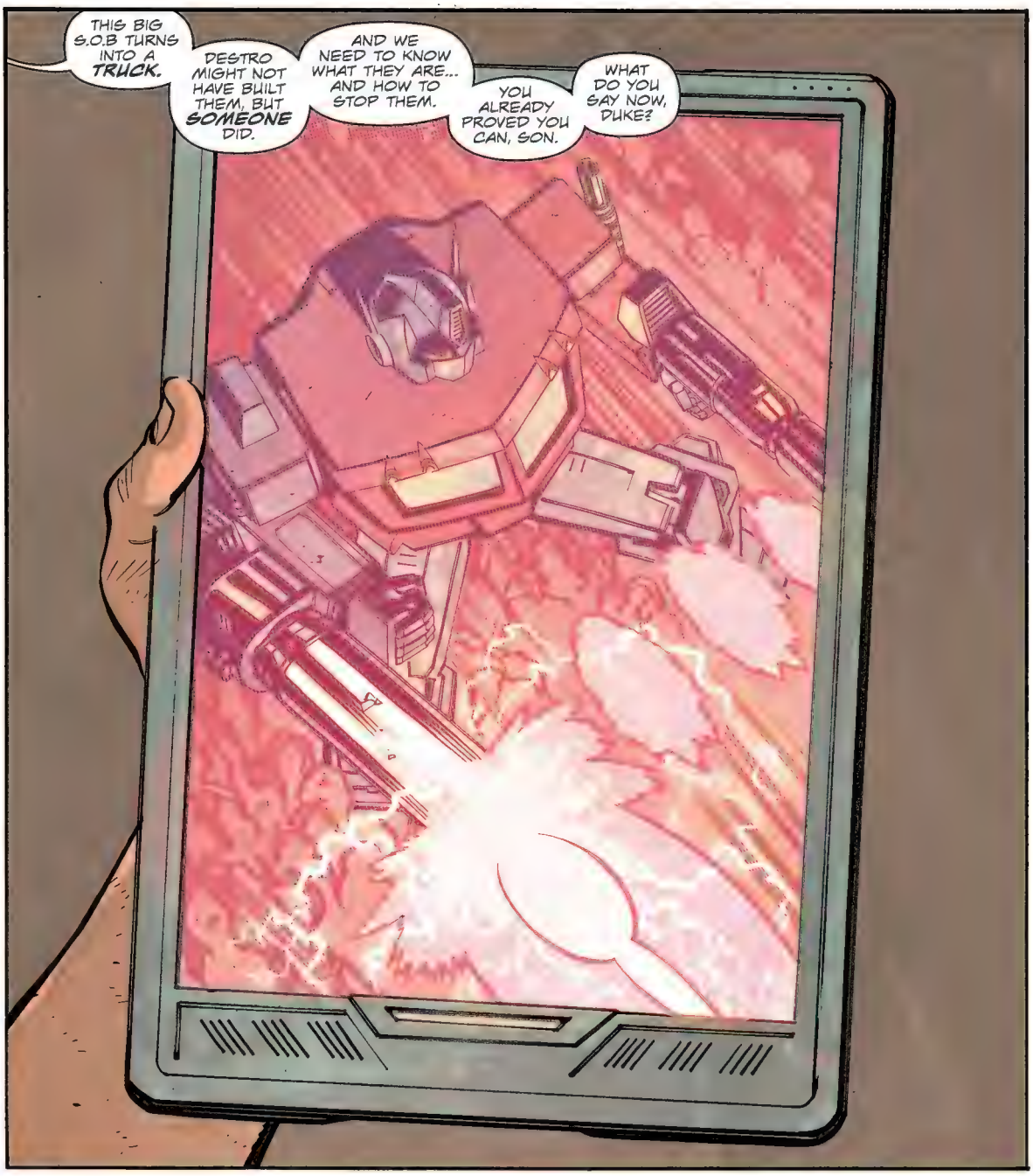

WHY TAKE ME BACK TO THE PIT, COLONEL?


THIS IS OUR NEW BASE OF OPERATIONS.
BUT THE ENEMY KNOWS ABOUT IT.
LET THEM COME.

I KNEW YOU WEREN'T DEAD!
NOTHING KEEPS MY BOY DOWN!
HE NEVER GIVES UP!

DAMN RIGHT.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT HERE, CLUTCH?
HAWK DIDN'T TELL YOU?

I WANT YOU TO BUILD A HIGHLY TRAINED SPECIAL MISSION FORCE.
ONE THAT CAN HANDLE THESE NEW THREATS ON THE HORIZON.
NOT A CHANCE. I'M NOT FIGHTING ANYONE'S SECRET WAR.
CLUTCH, YOU GOT A RIDE OUTTA HERE?
HOLD ON, DUKE.
THIS IS BIGGER THAN YOU KNOW. THERE'S A LOT MORE HAPPENING HERE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. IT'S MORE THAN JUST DESTRO.
IT'S MORE THAN JUST ONE JET THAT TURNS INTO A ROBOT...
WHAT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ONE OF OUR DRONES CAUGHT THIS ON SURVEILLANCE A FEW MONTHS AGO.


THIS BIG S.O.B TURNS INTO A TRUCK.
DESTRO MIGHT NOT HAVE BUILT THEM, BUT SOMEONE DID.
AND WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE... AND HOW TO STOP THEM.
YOU ALREADY PROVED YOU CAN, SON.
WHAT DO YOU SAY NOW, DUKE?

WE DESTROY THEM ALL.

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO

[redacted]

GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

This is only the beginning… DUKE is over, but Conrad Hauser's journey into the Energon Universe is just getting started. Sean here, thanking you all for support and feedback that's made the EU the biggest success story in comics. Thank you, Josh, Tom, Jordie, and Rus for making an amazing comic.

Thank you to all the readers. The new and the O.G.s. Thank you to Skybound for trusting us with this story and letting us have some fun with these characters we love. Tom, Jordie and Russ killed it on this series!

This really is just the beginning. We're just getting started on our massive Energon Universe. It's only going to get more nuts from here.

Yo Joe! It's been a while since I have been this excited for a new 'shared universe'; and right now, the Energon Universe is the best thing going in comics, hands-down. I await every issue with breathless anticipation!

That being said, I have to take issue with DUKE #3. Spoiler alert: you killed Major Bludd! What the heck. We get a mere 4 pages of the legendary Cobra villain, Major Bludd, before you unceremoniously excise him from the series. This is upsetting. Please do not kill off characters too soon; the slow build of this new universe is crucial to keeping us fully invested and I want to see ALL the characters, and ALL the vehicles, and really get to know them before you decide to break my heart and kill someone off. Have mercy Joshua Williamson. I am retaining a modicum of hope that Major Bludd will indeed return, and with a vengeance.

Warmest regards,
Istvan Kolnhofer
Scottsdale Arizona

Istvan, by now you know Major Bludd isn't dead, and it's safe to say he'll return in a major way down the line. We love all these characters and are trying to build a shared universe with many, many years of stories to come… so killing beloved characters prematurely isn't in our plans… It's much more fun to maim them.

YEAH! We're in building mode here. We're not taking toys off the table yet. But when we do…you won't expect it!

That being said, I love Major Bludd and we'll see him return again! He needs his revenge!

Yo Duke!

I'm Loving this Duke series! Every issue's a thrilling adventure, filled with new surprises! Seeing who shows up, where Duke ends up and who's on his tail, it's always exciting! The characters feel familiar while the story and adventure feels fresh. Duke's my favorite comic, right now. Not just from the Energon Universe, it's the comic book I look forward to the most! I've bought extra copies of issue 1 and given them to friends because everyone should be reading this book! I can't wait to see how this story ends and I really hope we see more of Tom Reilly on future GI Joe comics!

My Thanks to the entire Skybound crew for this action-packed Energon Universe!

Shane "Nuke" Simek
Canton, Ohio

Tom Reilly is the BEST. Duke destroying the B.A.T.? The BEST. The cover to DUKE #4? The BEST. The hard part of working with Tom is finding new words to say that he's the BEST.

I love Tom. He's a great partner. A great storyteller who takes what I'm writing and levels it up. The energy he brings the heat to the story and the action. I hope to work with Tom for a long time.

Mr. Williamson and Mr. Reilly,

I am not a GI Joe kid. I'm too young to have ever bought the toys and have never watched the cartoon or read the original comics run. All that to say, what you have done with Duke is a miracle. You found a way to get me interested in the All-American true patriot on the run from his own government. Kudos to the whole team.

I have one question for you both: How do you keep track of all the characters and decide which ones to use? The more I learn about this franchise the more I see how sprawling it is. Is it a characters looks? Their personality from the cartoon or comics? I would be overwhelmed in your position.

Keep creating great comics!

Spike Stonehand of spikestonehand.com
Houston, Tx. USA

Well, I was a G.I. Joe kid, so I have my favorites. And I often start there.

But then I also keep in mind the characters' back stories and who makes the most sense for the story. I have a lot of G.I.Joe books and the

original file cards in my office, so I often will look at those. AND I have a bunch of the toys in the office. Original ones and the new Classified series. I will sometimes just stare at those and think about the characters themselves. Team building can be hard but Larry Hama already did a lot of the work for us with the looks, story and personalities and team dynamics he created them with.

It's a bit of a mix of what you have listed there. The looks, the personalities, and who they will work with or clash against the rest of the cast.

I think about this stuff A LOT. Probably too much. Originally Clutch was not going to be in the Duke series at all. But as I was starting work on the script for #2, he made a lot of sense and became a major piece. So there is no real set formula. But I will say that my own fandom does play a role in why I pick the cast as well. I think about what I would want to see as a fan of the characters and then I let the writer side of my brain take on the rest.

First, as a fan of the Joes, thank you.

I'm high functioning Autistic, and while adult me (we don't need to put a number on it) can recognize how difficult a time I had with other kids as child, I also recognize that the only real time we got along was GI Joe in backyards. When I was in college, and first moved out onto my own, the 'modern era' figures came out and the online communities started to form, making me feel more accepted once again.

In short, the Joes and the characters mean something, so thank you, genuinely, for bringing them back.

Thank you, as well, for making the Commander actually feel like a threat, as well as actually doing right with Cobra-La. Color me surprised, but also, impressed.

A hope I have, however, is that you continue to bring in the vast, and diverse, cast of Joe characters. While we have Stalker (and Lonzo is a big fave), I hope to see characters like Tunnel Rat, Roadblock, Spirit, Heavy Duty, Shipwreck, Doc, Zap, Torpedo, Lady Jaye and even new characters like Wolf Spider. (And I saw Jinx on the Scarlett series cover, which, THANK YOU for doing right by Shanna and giving her the focus she deserves!) And of course, Storm Shadow, the anti-hero of all 80's anti-heroes.

You'll see one of these characters very, very soon, and at least one other sooner than later.

My hope is to get as many of these characters into the Energon Universe as we can. I agree that G.I. Joe's vast and diverse cast has always been one of it's strengths.

While it's great that we have white characters like Duke, Scarlett, Snake-Eyes (and do not get me wrong, I need my Silent Master, soon), Rock and Roll, Flint and so on, I have appreciated comics being more open with giving characters more of a spotlight who did not have a chance, before, and GI Joe is full of them. Please, consider a series focusing on Stalker in Detroit, or Spirit in a sniper game in the wilderness, Torpedo and Shipwreck out in the high seas, so on!

Anyhow, don't mind me. Just excited to see more of my favorite childhood characters. It's been a blast, so far!

Nathan

I like the miniseries format to introduce a new Joe (or Cobra agent) and set up a new corner of the Energon Universe in a really meaningful way. It's just a matter of finding the right character and the right story-like we're doing with SCARLETT and DESTRO. As for Stalker, he'll next be appearing on one of those miniseries.

What's next? Be sure to check out the conclusion of COBRA COMMANDER in May, then the first issues of SCARLETT and DESTRO in June. In fact, check out the preview of DESTRO #1 on the following pages!

It's going to be a very exciting year for G.I. Joe fans!! Also, check out the ENERGON UNIVERSE 2024 SPECIAL- either on Free Comic Book Day or the retail version on May 8th-for the answer to "Where is Baroness?"

-Sean

OH YEAH, Be sure to get that ENERGON SPECIAL that is out in like a week from now! It's crucial to the story we are building and takes place right after this issue!

Then read COBRA COMMANDER #5 to get a sneak peak of what is coming NEXT!

-Josh

THE COBRA THREAT CONTINUES

DESTRO

Superstar writer **DAN WATTERS** (*Universal Monsters: Creature From the Black Lagoon Lives!*) and acclaimed artist **ANDREI BRESSAN** (*Dark Ride*) change the balance of power in the Energon Universe forever!

WELCOME TO THE ENERGON UNIVERSE

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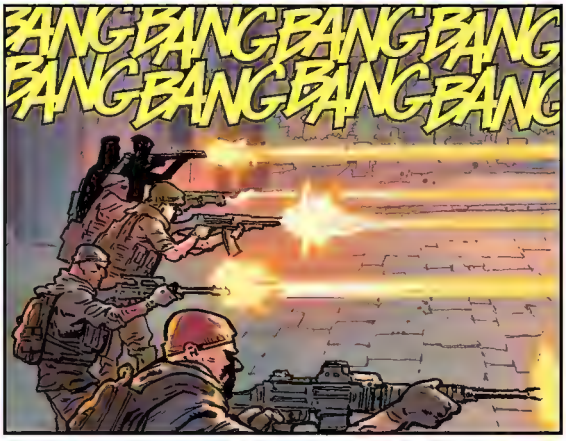
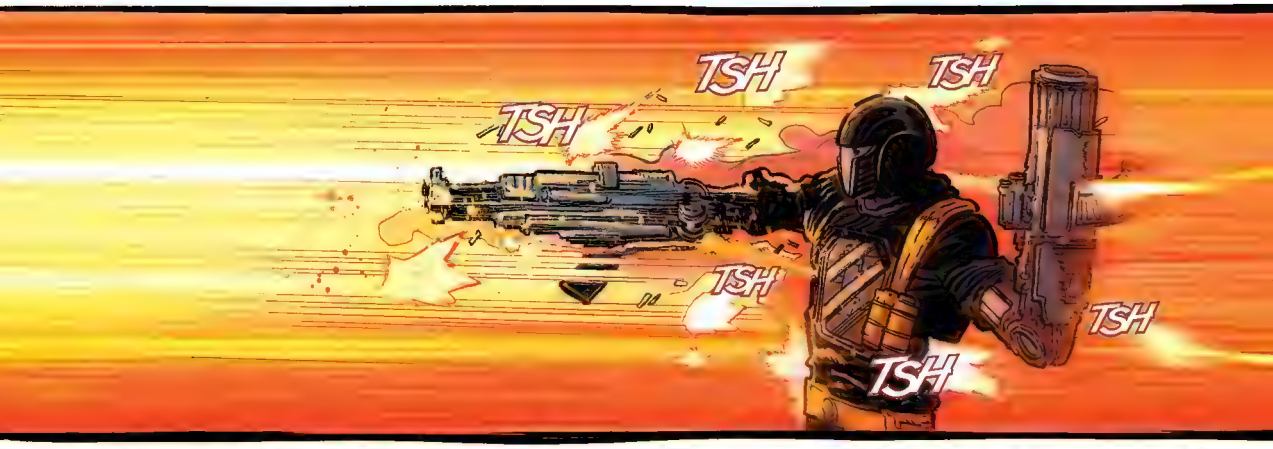
THE REVOLUTION IS CANCELLED, I'M AFRAID, BOYS AND GIRLS--ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR VASTLY INFERIOR FIREPOWER.
UH, WHO THE HELL IS THAT?

BATTLE ANDROID TROOPER
[ADVANCED PROTOTYPE]
HEAT SIGNATURE TARGETING SYSTEM
MODULAR GATLING ARM CANNON (SUBSTITUTABLE)
LOGIC CIRCUITRY (PROTOTYPE)

CH-CHK


BANG BANG BANG BANG
BANG BANG BANG BANG


TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH

HOW IS IT STILL STANDING?
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
OH, GOD! UP THERE...

"...THERE ARE MORE INCOMING!"

I TOLD THEM TO SHOOT TWO OR THREE OF THEM.
BOYS WILL BE BOYS, I SUPPOSE.
FALL BACK! BACK TO THE PALACE!
WE'RE OVERRUN! THEY AREN'T HUMAN! THEY'RE MACHINES!
IT--IT CAN'T BE HIM. GET ME OUT OF HERE!
IT'S TOO LATE.
THEY HAVE BREACHED IT! THE PALACE IS BEING LIBERATED!
SUPPORT THE EMANCIPATORS!
TEAR DOWN THE THRONE OF POWER!
IT... IT IS HIM. GET ME A DIRECT LINE.

DARKLONIA IS FREE!
PEACE
BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG
WE DESERVE PEACE
LAIRD DESTRO.
THE DARKLONIAN PEOPLE ACCEPT YOUR RESIGNATION, PRIME MINISTER.

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGON UNIVERSE

DON'T MISS THE EPIC IN THE MAKING!

Superstars **JOSHUA WILLIAMSON** and **TOM REILLY**, alongside showrunner **ROBERT KIRKMAN**, begin an all-new era for **G.I. JOE** as **DUKE** investigates mysteries that could change the world as he knows it.

"This immediately became a top of the stack book."
– SKTCHD

DUKE VOL. 1 AVAILABLE JUNE 2024

VOID RIVALS VOL. 1
By Robert Kirkman and Lorenzo de Felici
AVAILABLE NOW

TRANSFORMERS VOL. 1
By Daniel Warren Johnson
AVAILABLE MAY 2024

COBRA COMMANDER VOL. 1
By Joshua Williamson and Andrea Milana
AVAILABLE JUNE 2024

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